

for the same reasons that the women died in the Triangle Fire.

Meeting the bottom line is apparently worth the cost of inhuman conditions. We are repeating the same mistakes that the U.S. remedied decades ago. And although we have standards to protect American workers, our trade agreements lack teeth and do not even mention labor rights. By ignoring international workers rights abuses, we are not only allowing, but assisting in the mistreatment of millions of workers in sweatshops around the globe.

It is our own fault that nothing has changed.

This global economy that we support, apparently without question or reservation, is allowing countries to fight for commerce by allowing the lowest standards. And if this standard allows for a factory to lock its doors, while children work for twelve-hour days to make children's toys at the lowest cost possible, so be it.

And if there is a 1993 fire at a factory in Bangkok which kills 188 workers, eerily similar to the Triangle Fire, then the company can just move its business to another location and re-set up shop—no questions asked. No sanctions imposed.

As William Greider points out in his introduction to the book, *The Triangle Fire*, "the passivity of government and the public simply leads further down a low road. More injustices appear, and they, too, must be tolerated in the name of commerce."

"In the name of commerce."

It is "in the name of commerce" that international laws will not produce reasonable standards for business performance.

It is in the name of competitive advantage, that instead of improving working conditions, countries are trying to out do each other with the lowest standards to attract our commerce.

Changing the attitude of all Americans is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. Everyone should be outraged by sweatshops. But they should be just as outraged that we in the United States are enabling the sweatshops to continue.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 81, and remember the Triangle Fire. Remember what it did for our country. Honor the victims of the fire.

And recognize the ability of progressive thinking organizations, with the help of businesses groups and government support, to change the lives of people for the better.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, how different history would be if long ago people had taken Your holy word seriously: "Make justice your aim." Each day would be filled with promise and hope if all of us upon rising would make justice our aim. Without blaming anyone or without seeking applause, each day would lead to changing the world, if justice alone were our aim.

Justice itself would give balance to our daily routine, breathe contentment into our souls and set us free. Justice toward others would create a mutuality with every other person that would be fair, take us beyond expectation and codependency until we found trust and security.

Lord, if we as a people and as a Nation were to make justice our aim, how would this change our priorities? Could we change that much? In every age You alone, Lord God, take people beyond their wishful thinking and beyond themselves. You alone bring about lasting and true justice.

So, Lord God, in us and through us make justice Your aim now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker pro tempore's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY REPEAL

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, later this week, we will again vote to remove the marriage penalty from our Tax Code, and this time we have a President who will sign the bill.

Eighty-five percent of the American people want us to do this, and with good reason. Forty percent of all first marriages end in divorce, single-parent families have increased 248 percent since 1960, and the percentage of children born out of wedlock has gone from 10 to 33 percent during the same period. Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen families in this country.

The Tax Code is not the only reason this has happened. For 30 years we had a welfare system that tore families apart. Fortunately, a Republican Congress reformed that system. We still spend \$1,000 supporting single-parent families for every \$1 we spend encouraging couples to marry and stay together.

Clearly, we have a lot of work to do to strengthen marriages in America. This week we will have a chance to change the Tax Code that penalizes couples for getting married in the first place. I urge all my colleagues to support this very important bill.

PASS FLAT SALES TAX AND ABOLISH IRS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, in 1998, Congress reformed the IRS and included two of my provisions. The first transferred the burden of proof from the taxpayer to the IRS; the second required judicial consent before the IRS could seize our property, and the results are now staggering. Property seizures dropped from 10,037 to 161 in the entire country.

The IRS had a license to steal, and they were stealing 10,000 properties a year. And if that is not enough to tax our gallbladders, the IRS is now complaining the new law is too tough. Beam me up here. It is time to tell these crybaby IRS thieves that we are going to pass a 15 percent flat sales tax and abolish them altogether.

I yield back what should be the next endangered species in the United States of America: The Internal Rectal Service.